

Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy

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| Appendices | | | |

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Housing for Women (HfW) wants all customers to have their views heard and for our staff to be able to do their jobs effectively. To achieve this, Housing for Women need to manage the demands on our service by those who behave in an unacceptable manner.
- 1.3 Housing for Women will take action to manage the behaviour of any customer who create an unacceptable working environment for our staff, or that has an adverse impact on our staff's ability to deliver our services to other customers.

2 Policy aims and objectives.

- 2.1 This policy applies to all customers, all Housing for Women staff and those acting on Housing for Women's behalf such as contractors and managing agents.
- 2.2 This policy aims to ensure that all customers are dealt with fairly, honestly, consistently, and appropriately including those whose actions are considered unacceptable.
- 2.3 This policy does not affect your statutory rights.

3 What is unacceptable behaviour

- 3.1 Housing for Women recognise that customers may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a customer approaching our services. However sometimes actions/behaviours become unacceptable and involve abuse of our staff or our processes including:

Unreasonable demands

This may include:

- Requesting large volumes of information (this does not apply to Subject Access Requests (SARs))
- Asking for responses within an unreasonably short time frame - less than 5 working days
- Refusing to speak to an individual or insisting on speaking with another individual unless there is a conflict of interests.
- Behaviour or conduct that does not allow or unreasonably limits HfW to comply with their obligations as landlord. e.g. access for repairs and annual inspections

Harassment, verbal abuse, aggression, and violence to H4W staff and stakeholders

This may include:

- Offensive language, including that of racist, sexist, ableist, transphobic, or homophobic nature.
- Derogatory or patronising remarks and rudeness
- Inflammatory allegations that individuals have committed criminal, corrupt, or perverse conduct without any evidence.
- Threats of violence
- Recording conversations without prior consent
- Contacting staff using their personal details or social media
- Publishing personal, sensitive, or private information about staff online or on public domains/ social media

Unacceptable levels of contact

Sometimes the volume and duration of contact made to our service by an individual causes problems. This can occur over a short period or over the lifespan of a complaint/service issue.

We consider that the level of contact has become unacceptable when the amount of time spent talking to a customer on the telephone, or responding to, reviewing and filing emails or written correspondence impacts on our ability to deal with that complaint/service issue, or with other customers' complaints/service issues.

Unacceptable or persistent levels of contact include:

- Continuous contact while we are in the process of considering a matter,
- Repeated telephone calls over a short period, for example, a high number calls in one day or week,
- Lengthy telephone calls repeating the same points of discussion,
- High volumes of information provided by email or post referencing the same issues, unnecessarily or excessively copying us into emails to other parties.
- Insisting that the response is not adequate despite demonstrable correspondence addressing the concerns raised.
- Continuing to raise the subject matter without providing any new evidence when the complaints procedures is exhausted.
- Contacting different people or departments to try and get a different response.
- Changing the substance of a complaint by persistently raising new issues whilst the first complaint is being dealt with (new issues will be dealt with as new complaints)
- Persistently demanding that specific action is taken when there is no reasonable basis for expecting this following our investigation.

Refusal to co-operate

When we are looking at a complaint or service request/issue, we will need to ask the individual who has raised this to work with us. This can include agreeing with us:

- the details of the complaint/ service request/ issue we will look at,
- to provide us with further information, evidence or comments on request, or
- help us by summarising their concerns.
- Sometimes, an individual repeatedly refuses to co-operate and this makes it difficult for us to proceed. We will always seek to assist someone if they have a specific, genuine difficulty complying with a request.

However, we consider it is unacceptable to bring a complaint/ service request/ issue to us and then not respond to clear and appropriate requests by staff.

- 3.2 Housing for Women will consider your known vulnerabilities and support needs when determining our response to unacceptable behaviour. Where possible, we will request that a family member, friend, or support worker represents you in your dealings with us. Housing for Women will consider if a multi-agency approach is necessary where you are receiving support from other bodies such as social services.

4 Actions Housing for Women will take to manage unacceptable behaviour.

- 4.1 Housing for Women will try to reach an arrangement with you to resolve the issue, allowing you time to consider and adjust your behaviour. If you persist with unacceptable behaviour, Housing for Women will issue you a formal warning.
- 4.2. The formal warning will include examples of where your behaviour has been considered unacceptable, and reference what steps may be taken if the behaviour continues. Your tenancy may be at risk if unacceptable behaviour is persistent.
- 4.3. There may be situations (such as threats, violence, harassment) where the behaviour requires instant action without a warning being issued.
- 4.4 Formal actions taken to manage unacceptable behaviour will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and may include:
- Providing a single point of contact (other staff will be instructed not to engage or respond)

- Limiting how or when you may contact us, for example limiting the frequency and duration of calls, emails, and visits, and/or limiting contact to a single form, i.e. writing, email, or telephone only.
- Limiting contact to certain times or to a limited number of times per week or month.
- Declining to give any further consideration to an issue unless additional evidence or information is provided.
- Only considering a certain number of issues in a specific period.
- Responding to you only through a designated advocate or representative.

- 4.11 In cases of violence or harassment, Housing for Women may involve the police, take legal action, or end direct contact with you.
- 4.12 You will be issued a letter explaining the actions taken in response to your behaviour, this may include a 'flag' against your tenancy record in our housing system/database and providing you with information on the review period for the decision and how to appeal the decision.
- 4.13 Any restrictions set will be subject to a review period, and this will be communicated to you. If your behaviour has improved at the point of review, consideration will be given to lifting the restrictions. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the restrictions will continue, and Housing for Women will provide you with an explanation and a new review date.
- 4.14 If you do not feel our actions are reasonable in response to your behaviour, you may refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman